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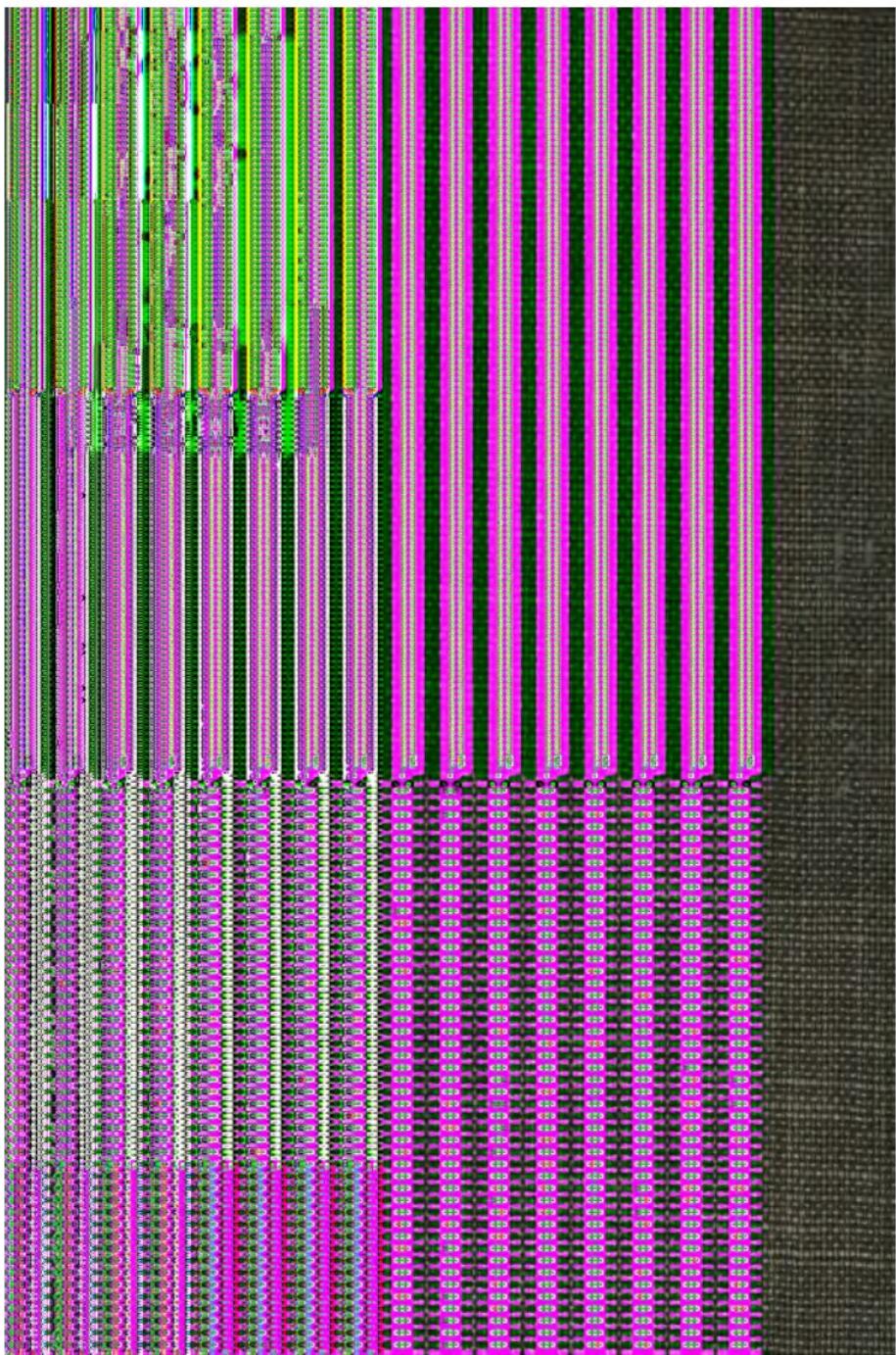
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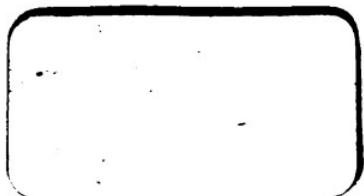
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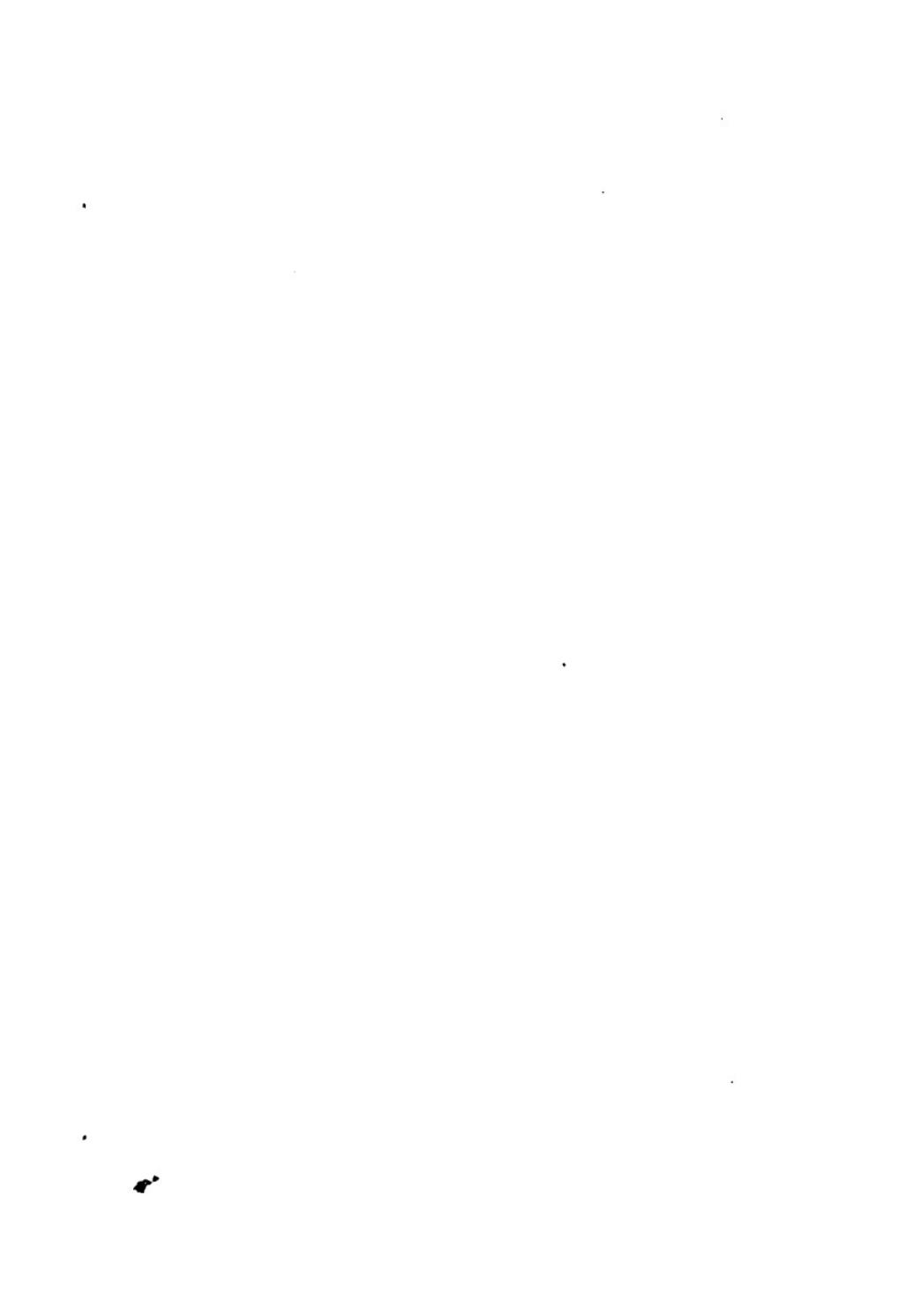
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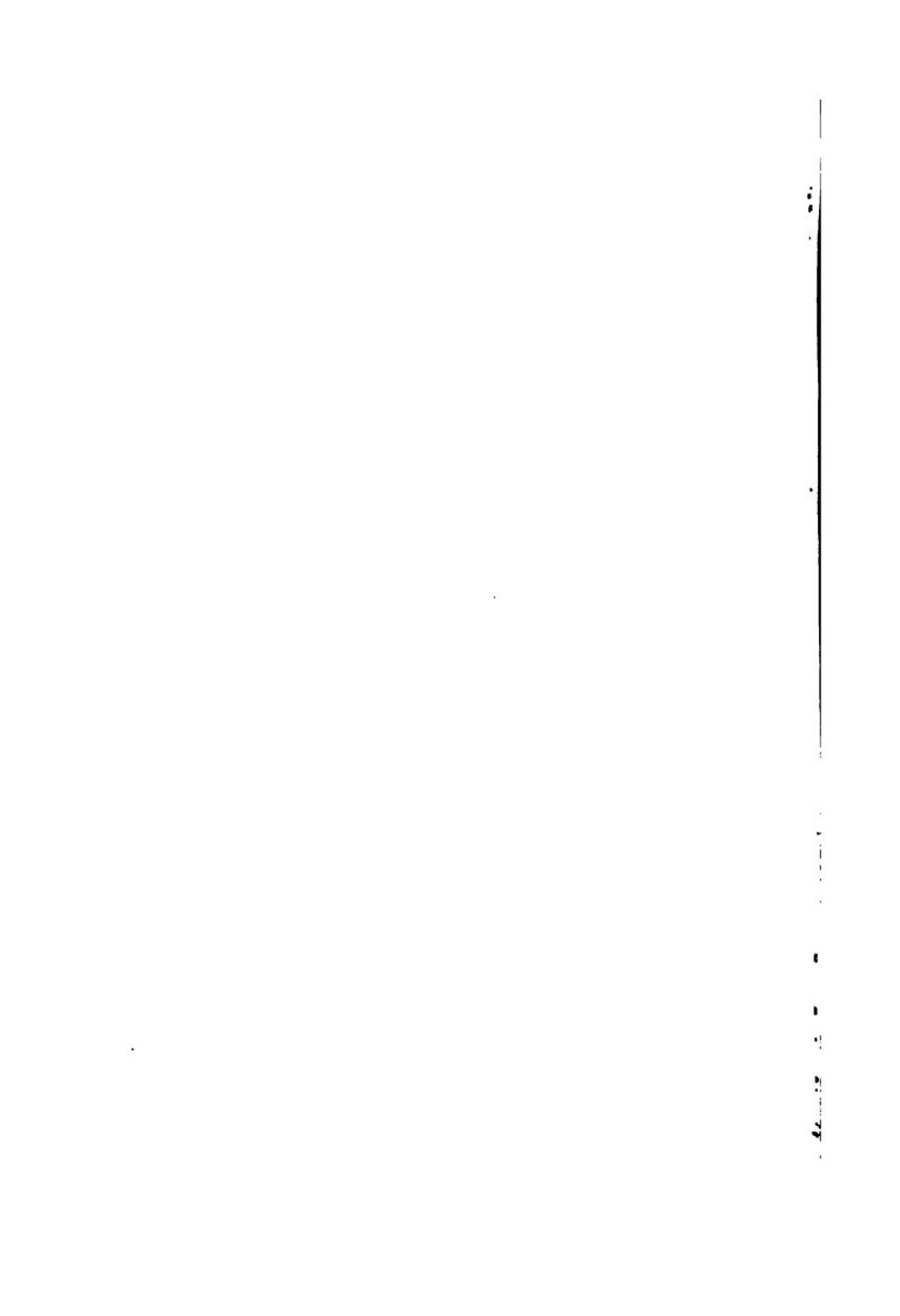
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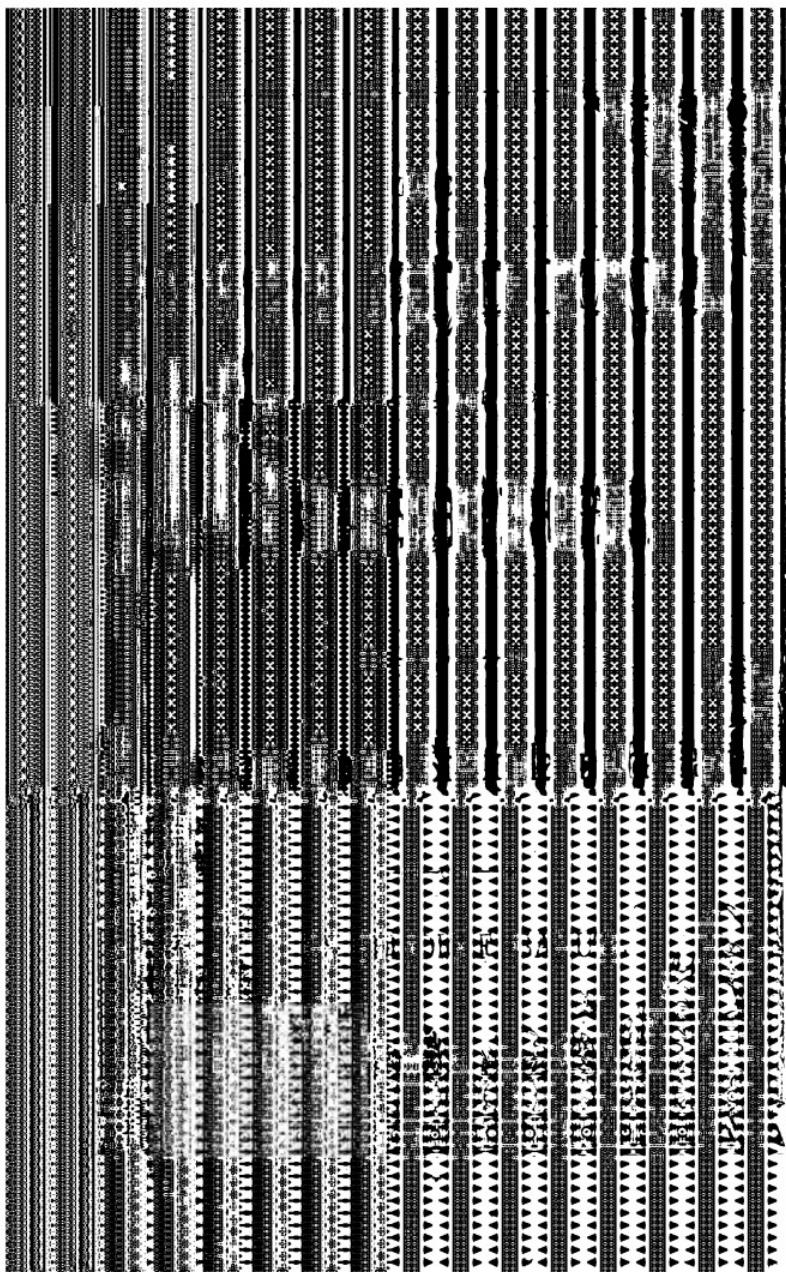
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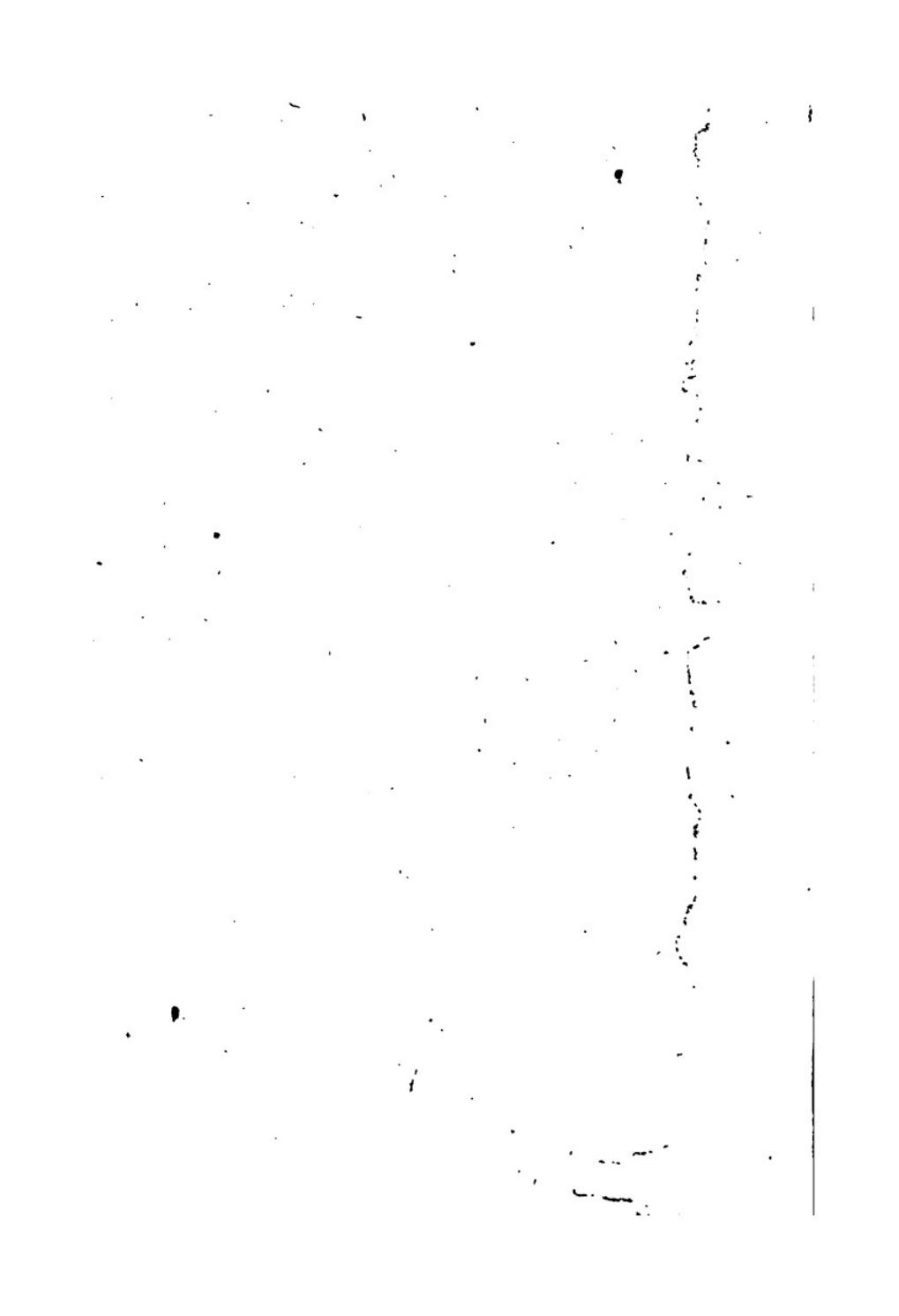












THE
SIEGE AND FALL
— OF —
CONSTANTINOPLE.

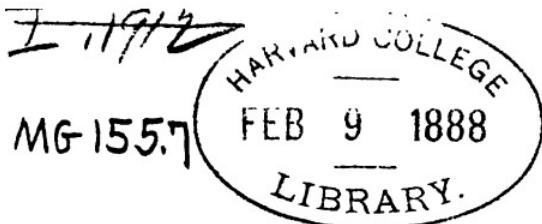
THE LAST ROMAN STRUGGLE IN THE EAST.

BY FELIDIO F. GANUTI.

FIRST EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE relation of the Siege and Fall of Constantinople was never separately published in the English language, or perhaps in any other language. The reader shall be undoubtedly much interested in reading the description of the event which deprived Christendom of that famous city, unsurpassed in its strength, and only next to Rome in history. Constantinople is presently threatened by some European powers; Russia has for a long while aimed at its conquest, and if in the course of time the infidels shall be repulsed from Europe, and the great metropolis again in the possession of the Christians, the public will undoubtedly value and esteem the narration of the event which extinguished forever the Roman Empire of the East.

The informations for the following pages have been gathered from many volumes, both of history and of travel, but as some authors differ from others it was thought proper to follow the most esteemed and authentic volumes: such as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks*; Edmond de Amici's *Constantinople, &c., &c.*

As the public was destitute of a book on this important episode of history, I thought it proper to publish one; and I hope that it shall meet the favor and approbation of the general readers.

AUTHOR.

Pittsburg, Pa., May 13th, 1887.



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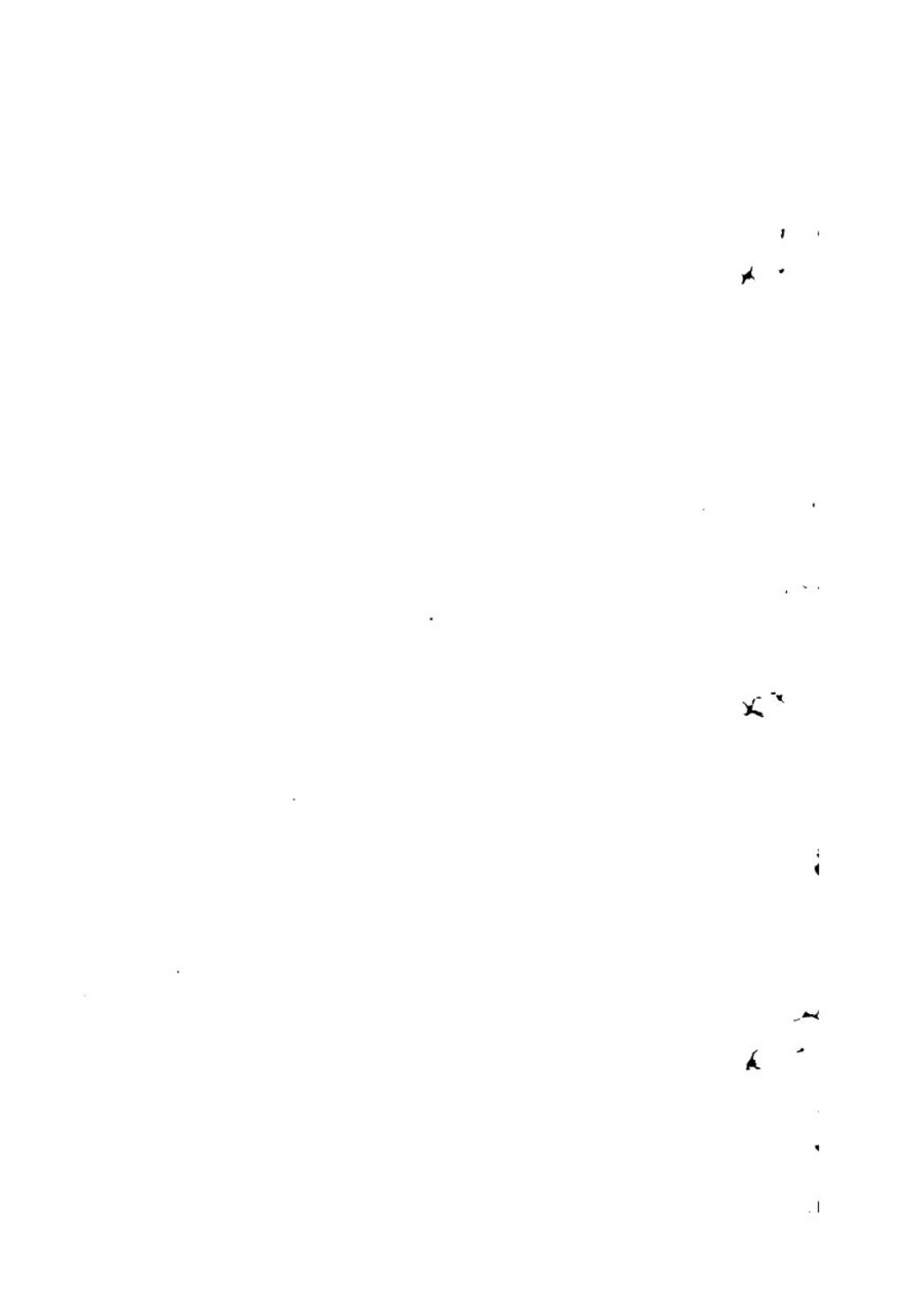
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The Siege and Fall of Constantinople.

THE LAST ROMAN STRUGGLE IN THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

MAHOMET THE SECOND—HIS DESIRE TO MAKE CONSTANTINOPLE THE CAPITAL OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE—HIS FIRST STEP TO CONQUER IT.

MAHOMET the Second was born in Adrianople, in the year 1430. His father was Sultan Amurath the Second, and his mother a Christian princess of Servia. In his youth he studied under the tuition of a skillful master, and when he was in the age of manhood he had the knowledge of five languages besides his own. The geography and history of the world were familiar to him; he studied with care astrology, which in his times was considered a great science, and acquired some knowledge of the mathematics. In his hours of leisure, he read with great interest the lives of ancient heroes; assiduously studied the stratagems and the achievements of Alexander, Augustus, Theodosius, Caesar, and of

Constantine the Great ; and the conquests of those great generals excited his emulation. Before he had arrived at mature age, his father twice assigned him the throne, but he was too feeble, in his tender years, to govern the vast and powerful empire of the Ottoman Turks ; and the surrounding dangers, compelled the divan, or court, to recall the able and successful Amurath. At an early age, Mahomet began to be very ambitious, and, as he advanced in years, he greatly desired to conquer ; nor did he ever fail to derive lessons from the wars in which his father was engaged.

The dream of Othman, which foretold the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, was ever, perhaps, lively pictured in his imagination ; and the history, the beauty, and the situation of that great city, made him continually wish for its conquest. While he awaited to ascend the throne, and studied to make himself a successful soldier and an accomplished monarch, he hoped that one day he would be able to make the city of Constantine the Great, the capital of the Ottoman

Empire. He felt, that while Constantinople remained in the possession of others, the European communication with his country could never be secure; and that it was expedient to conquer the city, in order to advance towards the West. Nor was he ignorant of the fact, that the conqueror of the sister of Rome, would be invested by the majesty which still existed within those walls that had encircled for over eleven hundred years the chosen seat of the first Christian Caesar. While he was in the government of Magnesia, where he had retired after his marriage to a daughter of a Turkman emir, he received a sudden message from the divan, informing him of the death of his father, Amurath. Without delay, he sprang on an Arab horse, and exclaiming "Let those who love me follow me!" he advanced towards the shores of the Hellespond which he passed with a chosen guard. At a short distance from Adrianople, then the capital of the Ottoman Empire, he was met by the viziers or ministers, by the highest personages, by the soldiers and citizens, and was saluted Sultan.

He succeeded Amurath in the year 1451, and removed the cause of sedition by ordering the murder of his two infant brothers. As soon as the ceremonies of his enthronement were over, he commenced a general reformation of the laws; called to severe account the treasurers of his father; and his subjects beheld with surprise, the flourishing results of his new rules. All the feebleness of youth were fully outgrown when he assumed for the last time the tittle of Sultan. He had a strong memory, and although occasionally cruel, he was a good legislator and had the military skill and prowess of his greatest ancestors.

His first war was in Asia Minor, where he subdued with great celerity the sovereign of Capadoccia, who had invaded the Turkish Dominion. The great desire which he had for the conquest of Constantinople, made him anxious for the time in which he should be able to make that famous city his capital, and amid the busy hours of his government, he strove to open a way for the execution of his enterprise.

On the European side of the Bosphorus, which is

a great strait that connects the sea of Marmora with the Euxine or Black sea, Mahomet resolved to build a fortress, and on the 25th of March, 1452, Asomaton, the appointed spot about five miles from Constantinople, was covered with a large throng of Turkish artificers. The work was carried on with great diligence; the materials were transported from Europe and Asia; and Mahomet, with his viziers directed and urged the work with indefatigable vigor. This was his first step towards Constantinople, and while he slowly advanced to execute his enterprise, he was careful to procure all advantages, and to act in a friendly manner towards the nations that surrounded his empire.



CHAPTER II.

CONSTANTINE PALÆOLOGUS—HIS CONDUCT TOWARDS MAHOMET—
COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES—BLOCKADE OF CONSTAN-
TINOPLE.

*T*HREE years before Mahomet succeeded Amurath,
Constantine Palæologus was crowned Emperor of the Roman Empire of the East, at Sparta by two deputies. He reached Constantinople in the spring, and was received by the acclamation of the people. The character of that noble monarch crowns the annals of Constantinople with such glorious memory impossible to be forgotten. His conduct, when he was surrounded by intolerable misfortunes, and when with the zeal which marks the greatness of a wondrous patriot he defended his capital till death, was worthy of his most glorious ancestors. When he ascended the throne, the once powerful and great Empire was reduced to a few towns besides Constantinople ; and, although the first years of his reign were peaceable and prosperous, the successor of Amurath made him conceive, but not too soon, his approaching danger. After having heard that Mahomet had become Sultan

of the Ottoman Empire, he strove to win his friendship ; and his confidence was revived by the polite words of Mahomet, who, in taking advantage of all the circumstances which would benefit the execution of his enterprise, was far from making any person suspicious of his secret desire. At first, Constantine thought that the young monarch was too feeble, as he had before proved, to govern his subjects, and that he could never be able to disturb the neighboring nations with his arms. But his thought was soon cancelled by the words of his minister Phranza, whose experience made him conceive long before the Emperor, the ambition of Amurath's successor. However, Constantine remained confident of his safety till he was sure of Mahomet's resolution of building the fortress, when, suspecting his approaching danger, he immediately instructed his ambassadors to oppose the action. They strove in all manners to divert the Sultan from building the fortress which would tend to violate the alliance of the nations and command the strait. But no reason could convince the perfidious Sultan to relax his resolution,

and after having listened to the supplications of the ambassadors he sternly replied : "I form no enterprise against the city, but the Empire of Constantinople is measured by her walls. Have you forgot the distress to which my father was reduced when you formed a league with the Hungarians ; when they invaded our country by land, and the Hellespond was occupied by the French galleys ? Amurath was compelled to force a passage of the Bosphorus ; and your strength was not equal to your malevolence. I was then a child at Adrianople ; the Moslems trembled ; and for a while the Gabours (*) insulted our disgrace. But when my father had triumphed in the field of Warna he vowed to erect a fort on the western shore, and that vow it is my duty to accomplish. Have ye the right, have ye the power to control my actions on my own ground ? for this ground is my own : as far as the shores of the Bosphorus, Asia is inhabited by the Turks, and Europe is deserted by the Romans. Return and inform your king that the present Ottoman is far different from his predecessors ; that his

*) A Turkish name for infidels, as the Christians were called by the Moslems.

resolutions surpass *their* wishes; and that he performs more than *they* could resolve. Return in safety—but the next who delivers a similar message may expect to be flayed alive."(*)

After hearing this declaration, Constantine resolved to unsheathe his sword, and to oppose with arms the approach and settlement of the Turks on the Bosphorus. But he was disarmed by repeated advices of his civil and ecclesiastical ministers, who affirmed, that the fortress could not long be maintained from an unexpected destruction. He saw the progress of the work, which Mahomet carried on his fortress; he almost guessed the intention of the Sultan, yet he tried in every way to gain his friendship, for he well knew that he was too feeble to contest with the Ottoman Turks of that time. Finally he was compelled to shut the gates of Constantinople in alarm. The retinue that accompanied the Sultan to the work of his fortress, had left their horses pasture on the ripe corn; the reapers felt the damage

*) Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."
Chap. LXVIII.

and took up arms against the Turks; several of both nations were slain in a conflict; and Mahomet, who anxiously waited for a rupture between him and the Emperor, ordered the extermination of the guilty village whose inhabitants were mercilessly massacred. This great offence was followed by a declaration of war, and as the struggle was deferred till the next spring, the two monarchs began their preparations.



CHAPTER III.

MAHOMET'S ANXIETY—THE RESTLESS NIGHT—CALIL BASHA—
GREAT ACTIVITIES—THE TREMENDOUS CANNON—THE AD-
VANCEMENT OF THE OTTOMAN ARMY—THE SIEGE OF CONSTAN-
TINOPLE FORMED.

WHEN Mahomet had finished his fortress and had stationed in it a commander with four hundred soldiers, he retired to Adrianople, and there commenced to be ready for the execution of his design. His mind was deeply bent on the conquest of Constantinople; he studied with indefatigable ardor the plan and the situation of that great city; he repeatedly delineated its outlines; disputed with his officers on which parts he should erect his batteries, and strove to invent stratagems which could facilitate its capture. He was always in great anxiety for the time in which he could make his decisive step, and his mind was ever occupied in thinking of his great enterprise.

One night, when the people of his capital had long retired to rest, and when his palace was free

from the usual noise of its occupants, he tried in vain to sleep. His imagination was vividly pictured by the fame of the city which he was about to conquer, by the thought of immortalizing his name if he succeeded in his enterprise, and by the majesty, the greatness, and the glory of his empire if he gained the city of Constantinople. At last, finding it impossible to rest, he started from his couch and commanded the immediate attendance of his vizier or prime minister. Calil Basha who had advised the restoration of Amurath, when Mahomet ascended the throne in his tender years, and who had a friendly feeling for the Christians, for which reason he was somewhat detested by his fellow-mahometans, was appalled at the Sultan's mandate at such hour of the night. With much fear and great anxiety, he hastened to obey, and after bidding farewell to his family he assumed the way to the palace.

When he had arrived before the Sultan, and paid him a slight tribute, as was the custom of that time, he awaited in silence and great respect his command. Mahomet who had anxiously waited for him said :

"It is not my wish to resume my gifts, but rather to heap and multiply them on thy head. In my turn I ask a present far more valuable and important—Constantinople." "The same God," said the vizier recovering from his great surprise, "who has already given thee so large a portion of the Roman Empire, will not deny the remnant and the capital. His providence and thy power assure thy success; and myself, with the rest of thy faithful slaves, will sacrifice our lives and fortune." "Lala" (or preceptor) continued Mahomet much satisfied by the viziers words, "do you see this pillow? all the night in my agitation I have pulled it from one side to the other, I have risen from my bed, again have I laid down; yet sleep has not visited these weary eyes. Beware of the gold and silver of the Romans; in arms we are superior, and with the aid of God and the prayer of the prophet we shall speedily become the masters of Constantinople." (*)

From the first day he reached Adrianople, Mahomet vigorously prepared in every way the plans

*) Gibbon.

for the coming event. He was careful to prevent hostilities with other nations, and made a truce with the great Huniades, which secured him against all attacks from Northern Europe. Of all the implements of war and destruction that were invented up to his time, he retained the most effecting, and studied with great care and much interest the wonderful use of the cannon, which had been lately invented by the Latins. An Hungarian who had deserted the Emperor, in offering his service, promised to make the Ottomans' artillery the greatest in the world. Mahomet received him with satisfaction, and by liberal pay and promises of reward he encouraged the skillful mechanic. A foundry was immediately constructed in Adrianople, and the Hungarian won the admiration of the Sultan by casting a cannon of an almost incredible size. Its bore measured twelve palms, and six hundred pounds was the weight of the stone ball which it carried. For its conveyance thirty wagons were joined together, two hundred men on both sides were stationed to balance and support the rolling weight, and two-hundred and fifty men marched

before it to clear the way and to repair the bridges.(*) Before the winter was over, Mahomet found himself ready to begin the execution of his enterprise so often attempted in vain by great commanders and by his ancestors. But he had more advantages than all those who had besieged Constantinople before without success: he was safe from all foreign attacks; he had well provided for the internal safety of his empire; and his regular troops were many, well armed and desperate. While preparing for his design, he never neglected any means, stratagem, or instrument, which would prove useful when required.

In the spring of 1453, he ordered his vanguard to advance; to give quarters to all those that submitted, and to destroy by fire and sword all those that resisted. When his soldiers had executed his orders with great celerity, he advanced himself with

*) Gibbon would have treated the description of the enormous cannon as extravagant, if he had not been convinced by contemporary writers. However, Von Hammer, in his valuable history of the Ottomans, asserts that he had himself seen the great cannon, and I am of the opinion that his statement removes all doubts.

the rest of his army, and when he had arrived before the doomed city, he planted the imperial standard in the vicinity of the gate of St. Romanus, and on the day 6th of April, 1453, he formed the great siege of Constantinople.



CHAPTER IV.

CONSTANTINE APPEALS TO THE CHRISTIAN POWERS FOR AID—STATE OF THE EMPIRE—SCHEME OF CONSTANTINE TO GET AID FROM THE POPE—NICHOLAS THE FIFTH—THE UNION OF THE TWO CHURCHES—GENNADIUS—BIGOTRY OF THE CITIZENS—ARRIVAL OF JUSTINIANI—GENERAL MEASURES TAKEN FOR THE STRUGGLE.

IMMEDIATELY after Constantine perceived his danger, he prepared with the zeal of a true monarch, and the courage of a great general, the defence of his capital. He implored with fervent prayers the assistance of the Christian princes, advising them of the danger in which he was reduced, and of the danger which would threaten the posterity of the Christian faith if the Ottomans conquered his empire. But almost the whole Christian world remained indolent at his implorations. The Western princes were continually involved in their domestic quarrels; some were too remote, some too weak, others thought the danger inevitable; and the pope was far from aiding the nation whose people were unbound from his obedience by their orthodox. Constantine had not a great number of subjects: the

empire which in the time of the Roman glory made the world tremble, was now reduced to the last extremity; the indolence of the Christian princes deprived him of the help which could have more than frustrated the design of his formidable enemy; and above all, the division of the Greek from the Latin church debarred him of a most sure aid. For it was in the power of the pope to assist him, as a great part of Italy was in his possession. The Greeks or Romans, as the inhabitants of Constantinople were called had long lost the ardor of war and liberty; they were no longer similar to those of the ancient times; and, except the Emperor with his volunteers, they were mingled in cowardice and religious frenzy.

Constantine contrived a great scheme in order to get aid from the pope: it was to unite the two churches; and hoping to succeed, he immediately dispatched ambassadors to the holy seat, with instructions to ask for temporal aid, and to promise the spiritual obedience of the Greeks. His scheme was undoubtedly judicious and would, perhaps, have

resulted in saving his empire, if the past, and the present conduct of the bigoted citizens had not formed a hatred against them in the mind of the Latins. Pope Nicholas the Fifth was not ignorant of the obstinacy of the Greeks ; he remembered the past promises of their emperors, which resulted only in new disorders and repeated corruptions ; he hardly believed their last assurance, but seeing the great danger which threatened their freedom, he thought that they were compelled to submit to their promises. Yet he was by no means prompt in his assistance ; and although it was in his power to assist the falling empire without delay, he believed it advisable to try first the promise of Constantine.

Accordingly, a few months before the siege, Cardinal Isidore of Russia appeared in Constantinople with a retinue of priests and soldiers. The act of union was solemnly performed ; and on the 12th of December, 1452, in the great dome of St. Sophia, both nations joined in sacrifice and prayers. But to the misfortune of the Emperor, who had saluted the Cardinal as a friend and father, and who had will-

ingly submitted to the obedience of the pope, the concord between the two religions lasted but a very short time. Some ceremonies of the Latin church were disliked by the Greeks; and as soon as the services in the dome were over, large crowds went to consult Gennadius, a monk considered holy and the oracle of the Greek church. He was nowhere to be found, but the words which he had written on a tablet placed on the door of his cell, and which expressed his sorrow for the union of the two churches, and reproached the Greeks for submitting to the obedience of the pope, telling them to repent, for they had submitted to foreign servitude, made them withdraw appalled. Convinced by his advice the religious virgins refused the act of union, and abjured forever all connections with the Latins. Their refusal was applauded by the major part of the clergy; and the people, who had with little or no satisfaction followed the example of the Emperor, gladly took their part. The venerable dome of St. Sophia which had so often struck with wonder and awe all those that beheld it, and whose history commanded

the highest respect, was deserted by the obstinate Greeks as soon as it was polluted with the Latin sacrifice. In the few months before the siege, the citizens of Constantinople were inspirited by vain hopes ; they spent hours in the taverns ; drank frivously to the health of the pope's enemies, and in their intoxication, insulted the Catholic faith of the Latins. Thus, the Greeks deprived themselves of the aid which the pope would have adjoined to the few soldiers that accompanied Cardinal Isidore. Help, perhaps, would have been plenty, if they had tried in all manners to win the sympathy of their fellow-christians ; if they had submitted to the obedience of the pope, at least till the danger was over ; and if they had regarded the Latins as their friends. But they, in their conduct, only renewed and inflamed the ancient hatred of the pope, as well as of many Latin princes against them ; and consequently, suppressed the will of those who had resolved to send succor.

Constantine, thus deprived of his greatest hope, called his subjects to arms, and strove to persuade the

wealthiest citizens, by picturing in vivid colors his distress and the coming struggle, to assist him in paying mercenary troops in order to strengthen the defences against his powerful enemy. But the majority of the Greeks seemed as if they were tired of independence and ripe for slavery, for, of the one hundred thousands or more that inhabited Constantinople, about six thousands only answered to the call of their brave Emperor; and the nobles, far from obeying the honest supplications, remained indolent; and some, prompted by pusillanimity and avarice, dug out their hidden treasures and disappeared from their country. (*) The zealous Emperor, notwithstanding the calamities which tended to make him helpless, remained undaunted; and almost without treasure, disappointed in every hope, and with a handful of men, he continued with inde-

*) Johnson's tragedy of Irene affords some lively descriptions of different events in the siege of Constantinople. The following lines are taken from it.

The groaning Greeks dig up the golden caverns,
The accumulated wealth of hording ages,
That wealth which, granted to their weeping prince,
Had ranged embattled nations to their gates.

fatigable ardor to fortify the scanty remnant of his empire. His army was small but brave; those volunteers who had promptly answered to his call, were influenced by that zeal which distinguished their ancient fathers. In their heart was true patriotism; their life was for their religion and liberty; they had resolved to follow the footsteps of the Emperor, to defend their country against any powerful enemy, and to die for their independence. In order to be as well prepared as he could possibly be to stand a long siege, Constantine negotiated the most necessary supplies in the isles of the Morea, the Archipelago, and Cicily; the inhabitants of which, in turn, sent him some succor of soldiers. But his most valuable and gallant auxiliary was John Justiniani, a noble Genoese who arrived a few weeks before Mahomet formed the siege, and whose bravery and military skill distinguished him next to the Emperor. Justiniani brought with him a chosen band of two thousand soldiers, and two well supplied galleys. No words can express the gladness with which the Emperor received that nobleman, for in the time of

great and universal danger, a distressed person considers his friends brothers, his benefactors his warmest friends, and his assistants, saviors. He immediately advanced donations to each of the two thousands ; and promised Justiniani, as a recompense for his great aid, the isle of Lemnos. As troops occasionally arrived from neighboring Christian cities, Constantine found himself, in a short time, at the command of nine thousand men. Still, although much relieved, a long resistance against the formidable force of the enemy was almost impossible, for with those few thousands he had to defend a circuit of about fourteen miles, the land part of which, undoubtedly to be attacked, measured nearly six miles. The works of defence were carried on with great celerity. Justiniani immediately adjoined his band to the Greek soldiers ; and all the restorations which his military skill and that of the Emperor suggested, were promptly executed. New works were in a short time finished ; cannons and all the engines of war, especially those of the Greek fire, were placed in the most advantageous places and sit-

uations ; and a strong chain was drawn across the harbor, called for its form and abundance the Golden Horn. The soldiers were all well supplied with arms and ammunition, and all the Christian ships that arrived in the harbor, were detained for the public services. This was all done before April ; and when Mahomet appeared before the city, the Emperor distributed his commands and undertook to defend the external wall.



CHAPTER V.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SIEGE—THE CITY DEFENCES—THE FIRST ATTACK—THE OTTOMANS REPULSED—THE SECOND ATTACK—THE STRUGGLE ON THE RUINED WALLS—VICTORY OF THE CHRISTIANS—ENERGY OF THE EMPEROR AND JUSTINIAN.

WITH an army of about three hundred thousand men, Mahomet invested the city by sea and land ; but as the two sides along the sea were almost inaccessible, he guided the principal attack on the land side. His tent was erected at a short distance from the gate of St. Romanus : the tremendous Janizaries, who formed the most valuable body of the army, were stationed in front of it ; and the troops of Asia and Europe were extended on its right and left, forming two wings, the one from the tent to the sea of Marmora, and the other from the tent to the Golden Horn. The whole Ottoman line was covered by a deep intrenchment ; and the artillery, which consisted of fourteen batteries, was extended before the walls. Intermingled with the cannons, were engines for discharging stones and darts ; and

the inextinguishable Greek fire, (*) which had long been a secret to the Christians, was efficiently used by the Ottomans in that siege.

The defences of the city on the land-ward side were very strong : they had often sustained the assaults of the empire's formidable enemies, who were successively compelled to abandon the idea of conquering the city by its impregnable walls ; and there are reasons to believe, that if Mahomet was not in possession of the cannons, he could never have succeeded in executing his enterprise. Three walls separate a short distance from one another extended from the sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn, a distance of about six miles. They were very thick and measured fifty feet from the ground, flanked with towers of different sizes and styles, which rose about

^{*}) This extraordinary liquid was wonderful for its fatal effect and burning quality. It was the most destructive element of the Eastern Romans, who received the knowledge of making and using it from a native of Heliopolis in Syria. Constantinople had been often saved by its unsurpassable destructive power ; and it was the terror of the infidels who were baffled in their hostile attempts towards the Christians, and whose formidable armaments were by it more than

twenty feet higher than the walls, and separated from one another by a distance of over one hundred feet. Before and parallel with the external wall, was a large ditch about one hundred feet deep, and thirty feet wide ; secured from the collision of the ground by a strong and smooth wall.

When Mahomet had everything ready, the attack was immediately commenced. A tremendous and incessant fire was opened against the weakest parts of the walls, and a subordinate army advanced. The balls fired from the cannons of great and small sizes, were accompanied by the darts, the stones, and the destructive Greek fire. The besieged skillfully responded the fire : whole lines of Ottomans were successively prostrated to the ground by their well

once almost completely destroyed. It was discharged from long tubes of copper and from the mouths of monstrous figures which were more often placed on the prows of galleys. It started with a tremendous report, and in the shape of a long tailed dragon it went meandering through the air with the velocity of lightning. The deepest darkness of the night was dispelled by its vivid light, and it is possible, perhaps, that its roaring sound, its terrible and swift flame involved in the smoke which it produced,

directed weapons : their small artilleries produced far more effect than those of the Sultan ; but their ammunition diminished, and to exterminate the wild advancing throng, was more than they could do. Under cover of incessant volleys from their artilleries, the Turks arrived at the edge of the ditch, and before the parts of the walls that appeared most effected, they resolved to make a road to the attack by filling the enormous precipice. Innumerable trunks of trees, fascines, and all kinds of rubbish, were thrown down in great hurry ; the weakest and the foremost were precipitated in the depth, partly by the weapons of the besieged, and partly by their impetuous fellow soldiers ; and for a while, that part of the Ottoman camp was similar to a running torrent covered at the surface by floating materials. To fill such a great

formed what may be classed an artificial hell in the air. Destruction marked its vehement course, and it effected great fatality in the enemy's camp. It is said that it was composed of bitumen, sulphur, and pitch, and nothing but vinegar, urine, or sand could extinguish it—water would nourish its vivacity. The Christians were jealous of the art of making it, and successfully kept it secret for 400 years. It was finally discovered by the Mahometans, and kept in almost universal use until the gun powder supplied its place.

ditch was the work of hours, and to fill it before the eyes of the vigilant Christians was almost impossible. Yet the furious Turks might have succeeded, for materials and human bodies fell into it like the water over a great cascade. But the besieged immediately prepared for a sally, and on the first opportunity, descended the walls, hastily passed the ditch on draw-bridges, and after a severe hand-to-hand fight, the Turks were beaten and precipitately retreated. That was the first encounter, and in it the superior bravery of the Christians was evident. The number of the Turks was countless or at least twenty times larger; and as the places of the slain were immediately supplied by great numbers of fanatics, it is a wonder that the bold Christians were not overpowered and cut to pieces. After the victorious soldiers had advanced some steps brandishing their swords and discharging their cross-bows at the flying enemy, among yells of joy, they returned within the walls, content of their success, and anxious for new trials. They would have pursued, if their number had been large enough, but they were well aware of the impossibility to encounter the

whole Ottoman power on the open field, and therefore, they were satisfied to maintain their defences. The next attempt of Mahomet was the practice of mines ; but as the soil was rocky, and the method of blowing up any obstruction by gun-powder was not yet known, after some unsuccessful attempts, he was compelled to abandon it. Another assault was decided upon. The tower of St. Romanus appeared the most accessible part, and he gave orders to attack it. A destructive fire from large guns was immediately commenced, and after some time the powerful tower began to yield to the irresistible discharges. A wooden turret, nearly as high as the walls, protected on all sides by a threefold covering of bulls hides, and well supplied with men and ammunition, was advanced on rollers towards the tower. While it moved, incessant volleys were discharged from its loop-holes, and when it had arrived at the edge of the ditch, scaling-ladders were raised by ropes and pulleys, and their foremost edges were rested on the adverse rampart. After many attempts and different maneuvers, the tower collapsed. The Turks suddenly leaped on the

ruins, and amidst war cries, savage yells of delight, and in a wild fury, commenced to fight their way through. It was a decisive moment, a moment of despair for the besieged, a moment of contempt for the besiegers, and a moment in which depended the existence of the last Roman spark. The Emperor and Justiniani were immediately on the spot with reinforcement. The struggle began at twilight : the Christians fought with all the bravery of ancient warriors ; throngs after throngs of the barbarians fell successively at their feet, prostrated by irreparable sword blows ; and as darkness drew near, the bold swarms that invaded the breach were overpowered and compelled to retreat in great confusion. The Turks were more enraged than discouraged by the defeat ; they wanted to make another assault with a greater number, but darkness frustrated their design, and they were constrained to await day-break, hoping that then, with fresh vigor, more power, and in every way ready, they would be more successful. The zeal and courage of the besieged were greatly inflamed by the two victories. As soon as the enemies were re-

pulsed, the breach was covered by great numbers of diligent workmen, and the work of re-building was immediately commenced on all sides, and carried on with indefatigable vigor. Constantine and the noble Genoese, far from thinking of rest, pressed by the thought of safety and by the aggravated danger, passed the whole night on the spot, urging the laborers, and procuring all advantages against new assaults. The following day, when the first rays of day-light were slowly melting the faint shadows of darkness, the Turks wonder-struck saw the tower of St. Romanus as strong and as entire as it had been; their turret reduced to ashes ; the ditch cleared from all rubbish ; and the defences as strong as before.



CHAPTER VI.

SIX SHIPS ARRIVE NEAR CONSTANTINOPLE TO AID THE BESIEGED
—THE GREAT NAVAL BATTLE—THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD
REPULSE OF THE OTTOMANS—VICTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN
SHIPS—FATE OF BALTHY OGLY.

BUT the most brilliant episode of that siege was the naval battle which occurred at the entrance of the Bosphorus. About the middle of April, some sails were faintly distinguished near the horizon on the sea of Marmora. They were five Christian ships that had sailed from the harbor of Chios, loaded with provisions and soldiers, which had been sent to aid the besieged, partly by the isles with which Constantine had negotiated, and partly by few neighboring Christian princes. Four of those ships belonged to the Genoese and one to the Emperor. They were of a large size well armed and very strong; the sailors employed in them were veterans of Greece and Italy, the most skillful, and long used to the arts and perils of the sea. Mahomet commanded the soldiers of his galleys to be ready in order to intercept the bold auxiliaries of the city which he was besieging; and

under the admiral Balthy Ogly, his fleet extended in form of a crescent, from the shores of Europe to those of Asia. The Turkish fleet consisted of about three hundred veisse's; but of those, eighteen only were of any strength or account. The rest had been hastily constructed when Mahomet meditated the siege ; they were like large open boats, and destitute of skillful managers. The whole fleet was filled by innumerable throngs of soldiers, perhaps too many to fight with great effect, and of those, few were accustomed to the sea. While the Christian ships were well provided with cannons and all the best implements suitable for naval defence, those of the Ottomans were not ; and as their arms were of inferior quality, they could depend only on their superior number. Without seeming effected by the enormous crowd of galleys that blockaded the way, the five ships with sails stretched by a gentle wind, and with waveing colors, swiftly and steadily advanced. The besieged crowded the walls, the towers, and the roofs ; the Ottomans thickly covered the shores to a great

length ; and all awaited in anxiety and enthusiasm the approaching struggle. Mahomet, mounted on a horse, rode down to the water's edge ; and with a stern look, cold countenance, watched every movement of his galleys and soldiers. The beautiful divisions of the sea and land, the charming form of Constantinople, built on seven hills, and appearing at a distance as if on a gradual ascend of a great mountain, together with innumerable varieties of colors on all sides,—the colors of the sea, of the soldiers uniforms, of waveing standards, of nature's countless objects, and of the sparkling armors effected by the shining sun,—made the spectacle most brilliant and magnificent. The five Christian ships close to one another in battle array, advanced towards the crescent of sails, and when at a short distance from it, a tremendous discharge of artillery was commenced. The Turks responded by discharging their arrows, and amid yells of enthusiasm, awaited the encounter. Pressed by a strong gale and managed by skillful pilots and oarsman, the bold ships, undamaged by repeated volleys, continued their course;

and amidst the clamor of the multitudes, the thunder of their cannons, the chants and war-cries of the soldiers, and the roaring sound of the Greek fire while flashing in the air like lightning, their prows struck with a terrible force the galleys which formed the crescent. The Turks becoming excited fought in a desperate manner ; they strove to overpower the enemy, but the crescent was immediately broken by the irresistible force ; and destructive discharges of cannon balls, stones, and Greek fire, kept dropping all around, involving everything in smoke. Their vessels were scattered, some sunk, and some took fire ; the battle became general and bloody, and for a while threatened general destruction. Both fleets continued to fight with great animosity and enthusiasm. The Turks fearless of death, attempted to surround the small but powerful enemy ; hundreds of them were either drowned, burned, or wounded in the attempt ; and at last, the artillery, the Greek fire, and the skillful maneuvers of the Christians, completely put them in great confusion. Their galleys were left to the waves, action on their side slackened

and the five ships were almost masters of the passage. Then were heard tremendous and incessant uproars, which honored the victorious, and ashamed the defeated. They were the cheers of the besieged, whose joy was inflamed by so great a sight, and the murmurs and yells of the besiegers on shore, who were appalled by so great and ignominious defeat. The men of the disordered fleet paused, and amid the rage of the battle, the roars of the camp, the cries of the dying and the wounded, the loud voice of Mahomet, which reproached their conduct, and commanded them to fight on, was distinctly heard, and struck like a thunder-bolt their ears. They felt the shame, ignominy appeared in their imagination, in all its odious uniforms ; the thundering voice of their master reanimated them ; their galleys were put in order, and with a resolution of victory or death, they advanced to assault the enemy. The Christians met them with an incessant fire from their artillery ; the result was as great as before ; but death had now become the glory of the Turks ; they pressed on, and although severe discharges killed

hundreds of their number, and sunk or burned many of their vessels, after repeated attempts they reached the prows, the sides, and the sterns of the five ships. In some places the Christians could no longer use their cannons with effect, and the struggle began hand to hand. The desperate and wild-like manner in which the Turks fought, almost surpassed the superior bravery of the Greeks and of the Genoese. For a while, the fortune of the day seemed to turn from the victorious, but after a bloody struggle the Turks were repulsed from the Genoese ships, and put in confusion by the artilleries. The ship of the Emperor was overpowered ; it was surrounded by an immense number of galleys ; the Turks began to capture it, and had it not been for the timely aid of the Genoese, they would have succeeded. The battle continued in great vigor ; the superior height and weight of the Christian ships scattered and sunk the obstacles ; swarms of Turks were swept away by the cannons and the Greek fire ; and at last, confusion prevailed over boldness ; the Ottoman fleet was overwhelmed by the skillful maneuvers and the well dir

ected discharges of the Christians ; their galleys were again left to the waves, and they were compelled to retreat in great confusion, towards the shores. Mahomet, who had watched and almost commanded his fleet, became greatly irritated ; he could not believe that his large fleet was not able to be victorious over five ships ; and with inflamed passions, careless of life, and accompanied by the uproars of the camp, he spured his horse into the sea, and with a voice which often made his soldiers tremble, reproached, threatened, and encouraged the defeated troops, urging them to fight on. They promptly obeyed : his presence, his voice, and his threats, far more feared than the enemy, gave them new vigor ; some order was restored by their admiral, and they advanced to another attack. But it was the last and more decisive. They were no longer as powerful as they had been ; their number was greatly reduced, and the Christians were yet as powerful as before. The struggle was again commenced ; the destructive discharges from the five ships were again fired with great dexterity : the energy of the Christians was

vigilant ; their maneuvers surpassed those of their numerous enemy ; and after a long struggle, the fortune of the day began to be on their side. The Turks fought with all the bravery which they possessed ; they pressed on, discharging volleys of stones and arrows, and prevailed over tremendous discharges. Their admiral done all that was in his power to keep order, but the Christians successively sunk other galleys, and in a short time confusion was inevitable. In vain did he strive to gain the victory by innumerable stratagems : the Genoese and the Greeks baffled him in every way ; and after a bloody struggle, and a tremendous loss on his side, his defeat was conceived. The Christians guided their ships to scatter and sink the galleys of the enemy, their cannons swept the surface of the sea, and the Greek fire was continually poured on the impediments. The Turks bravely resisted a long while ; but at last, they were weakened by repeated losses ; their galleys became uncontrollable ; the artilleries and the Greek fire thundered all around them ; the turbulent sea increased their confusion, its waves

dashed with great violence the galleys against one another ; they desperately tried to rally, but in vain ; the enemy advanced, the confusion became greater, and finally they were compelled to retreat towards the shores of Asia and Europe. The triumphant ships boldly advanced on the made way towards Constantinople ; and amidst the incessant cheers and acclamations of the soldiers and citizens that crowded the walls and towers, the chain which guarded the harbor was lowered, and they gloriously entered, The loss of the Ottomans was tremendous and incredible ; but it is affirmed by a contemporary historian, that they lost over twelve thousand men in that great naval battle. The loss of the Christians was trifling, and their ships were only slightly damaged. The brave but unfortunate Admiral Balthy Ogly, who had done all he could to render the Ottoman fleet victorious, and who could hardly be blamed for the defeat, met with an ignominious end, soon after he reached the shore. The ire of Mahomet was greatly inflamed by the defeat, and when he saw the Admiral, who had come to give account of the

battle, he immediately ordered him to be impaled. But the Janizaries interposed, and the irritated Sultan withdrew his sentence, inflicting another no less ignominious. Four slaves stretched Balthy Ogly on the ground, and Mahomet satiated his ire by striking him on the back one hundred times with a golden rod.



CHAPTER VII.

MAHOMET DOUNTED—A RETREAT PROPOSED—MAHOMET AVOIDS IT BY A GREAT STRATAGEM—THE GOLDEN HORN CAPTURED.

THOSE repeated defeats, especially that of the fleet, greatly debased the perseverance of Mahomet. His ardor for the great enterprise was chilled by the very doubtful and unfavorable prospect of its result; he felt his power decreasing without any advantage; and he became aware that in his present situation no successful attacks could be made. He saw the power of the besieged increasing: the five victorious ships had greatly relieved and strengthened them; and the thought of retreating, encumbered his energy. By a double attack by sea and land, he could, perhaps, subdue the city, but such could not be done, as long as the harbor remained in the possession of the besieged, and the harbor could not be captured, for the strong chain which guarded its passage was now defended by thirty ships of various sizes. The superior skill of the Christians, made him conceive the impossibility of forcing the way

through ; for, as the last encounter had proved, his fleet was unable to be victorious over that of the besieged. The words of retreat began to spread in the camp : the Grand Vizier, or prime Minister, was in favor of raising the siege ; and the siege would have been raised, if the second Vizier had not opposed the ignominious measure. Amid the doubtful resolutions, Mahomet felt his pride and glory falling : the hopes of many years, the greatness of his enterprise, and the imaginations of the past, were before him in his present situation : the preparations and sacrifices made for what he had believed a successful undertaking ; the shame of a retreat, and the ignominy of being defeated by so small a number of Christians, were pictured in his mind in most vivid colors. He paused, before giving his resolution to retreat ; and after having passionately studied all stratagems which could possibly avoid the hated measure, he contrived a plan which revived his falling hopes, and was worthy of the greatest military genius. It was to transport on land his lighter vessels and military stores, from the Bosphorus into the upper part of the

harbor which is some miles in length. The land on which the vessels and stores were to be transported, was full of obstacles, uneven and measured about six miles. But Mahomet was able to overcome all such impediments ; and the execution of his plan was the greatest engineering achievement of many centuries. A wide smooth way was made and covered with strong planks, from the shore of the Bosphorus to that of the Golden Horn. After it was made the strongest and smoothest way possible, it was smeared with the fat of sheep and oxen, to make it slippery in order to drag the vessels with more facility. When all means were provided, and everything prompt, eighty galleys were disembarked from the Bosphorus; one after the other was placed on the made way ; innumerable throngs of men poised them on all sides ; and with the aid of pulleys, rollers, and other useful instruments, they were pressed slowly on, in a long and single file. The great and tiresome work was accelerated by the encouraging words of the indefatigable Sultan, and carried on with great diligence amid the songs and cheers of the soldiers. Within the

darkness of one night, the squadron was safely transported on the long way, and launched in the waters of the Golden Horn. Mahomet was now master of the harbor, the Christian ships which guarded its remote passage, could not repel his fleet from its advantageous post; and while his zeal was greatly inflamed by the assurance of success, all the useful preparations which his skill suggested were immediately executed. Soldiers, batteries, and engines were placed on the new line of attack; and on the narrowest part of the harbor, a floating bridge of about seventy-five feet broad, and one hundred and fifty feet long was constructed. On it was planted one of the largest cannons destined to fire on the harbor part of the city, while the squadron of galleys well supplied with troops, engines, and scaling ladders, would attack the most accessible parts.



CHAPTER VIII.

CONSTANTINE AND JUSTINIANI ATTEMPT TO DISLODGE THE OTTOMAN ARMY FROM THE NEW LINE OF ATTACK—THE BOLD RESOLUTION—MASSACRE OF FORTY CHRISTIANS—TERRIBLE RETALLIATION OF THE EMPEROR—EXTREME DANGER OF CONSTANTINOPLE—MAHOMET MAKES PROPOSALS—CONSTERNATION OF THE CITIZENS.

TH E great and disastrous danger was immediately discovered by Constantine and Justiniani. Discharges of artillery were commenced with a view to destroy the fleet and bridge; but the vigilant Sultan was ever ready; his far superior batteries responded and silenced their fire; and volleys of stones and arrows, swept the places on which the besieged were seen. After some unsuccessful attempts, the two leaders saw the impossibility of firing against the superior power of Mahomet with advantage, and resolved to attempt the destruction of his new line in a sacred manner. One night, at a late hour, a number of the bravest and most courageous youths occupied some galeots; and with all the necessary means, secretly moved towards the fleet and bridge, with the intention of setting them on fire. They very near

succeeded ; but the Turks were more vigilant than suspected, and before they could reach near enough, the guards discovered their coming. An alarm was heard ; that part of the camp was immediately in arms : the bold Christians tried to retreat, but a Turkish flotilla was in pursuit ; the nearest galeots were taken, some sunk, and forty youths made prisoners. Mahomet, who had been alarmed by the danger which almost resulted in frustrating his design, ordered the captives to be massacred. That great affront and inhuman act, filled the garrison with horror and grief, most gloomy in their situation ; and Constantine, amid sorrow and great hatred, ordered the execution of two hundred and sixty Musulman captives, and exposed their heads from the walls. The retaliation was very inhuman ; but in the time of danger, when friends are loved with the warmest love, and detestation greatly increases against the principal enemy ; when the heart is melted by sympathy for the injuries received by a patriot or a co-operator ; and when the smallest provocation inflames the abhorrence of the distressed to the highest degree,

humanity for the common enemy is lost ; and the action of the Emperor was justified by the universal acclamation of his subjects, and by the death of the brave and patriotic youths, who lost their life in a most cruel manner, for attempting to save their country.

The slow but pernicious effect of Mahomet's attacks, greatly annihilated the power of the city defences, and exhausted the energy of the scanty garrison. From the first days of the siege, the Ottoman artilleries kept up a continuous fire against many parts of the walls ; and at the end of a month, the fall of Constantinople could not be doubted. The new line of attack effected what Mahomet desired : the landward side defences were weakened, by taking away from them detachments of troops and cannons which had to be sent along the harbor side ; and the fatigue of the garrison was doubled. When forty days of siege had elapsed, the great walls began to yield to the irresistible power of the most formidable implements of destruction known in those times. Four towers near the gate of St. Romanus

were demolished ; large breaches were made ; the ditch in some places was filled by the ruins of the defences ; and the way to Constantinople was open. The Emperor and Justiniani, always procured all the advantageous means possible ; new defences were built behind the ruined ones ; but in vain did they attempt to stop the enemy's actions ; and although their bravery delayed the fall of the city, they saw at last, the inevitable and near destruction. But the zeal and patriotism still existed in the soul of every Christian soldier who defended the works ; and they resolved to oppose the entrance of the Ottoman Turks, until the bitterest end. Mahomet was aware of the desperate resistance which the besieged vowed to make ; and although the destruction of Constantinople depended on his command, he strove to win the city without a future struggle. Various embassies had already passed between the city and camp without effecting any successful negotiation ; but on the 25th of May, the Sultan sent his last summons to surrender. He offered to the Emperor an equivalent honor ; and to the citizens, liberty for their re-

ligion or a safe departure. In his distressed condition, Constantine would undoubtedly have yielded to any sacrifice to save his Empire, but the city was the only wish of his enemy, and he had sworn to die in its defence. The great ignominy which would follow the days of his life if he surrendered the city, and his patriotic love which he had for it, made him at once detest the offer of the Sultan; and as a faithful monarch, he answered, that he would subdue to any honorable terms, give any price to obtain peace, but that he would die before surrendering the last city of his Empire.

Had he been faithfully supported by all his subjects, his resolution would have, perhaps, saved his capital. But the citizens of Constantinople were mingled in pusillanimity and bigotry, most fatal to their liberty; their spirit of indolence was kept awake by the belief of superstitious legends; and when the tremendous power of the Ottomans appeared before the walls, instead of taking up arms and uniting with those, whose patriotism dispelled the credence of religious legends and guided them to trust in their

power; instead of following the example of the ancient besieged, as the Cartaginians, whose conduct and value we admire among the most interesting annals of history, they remained indolent, despised the words and calls of the Emperor; and, conquered by the eloquent words of their priests, they believed in a spiritual deliverance. But they saw at last, and far too late, their approaching end; and amid religious frenzy and vain hopes, they sank into gloominess and prayers. When the walls were on all sides dismantled and the garrison was the only defence against the enemy; when the time had come in which the humblest patriot would have resolved to take up arms and to die with his fellow-citizens, they only accused the Emperor for their condition and nearing calamity. The horrible devastation of pillage and plunder; the sufferings under the yoke of the infidels; the melancholy and ignominy of a conquered life; and the terror of death or infinite servitude, were in their imagination with all the awful uniforms which in a distressed mind become most terrible and afflicting. In the extreme consternation which conquered the

energy of their body and soul, they spent their last hours of liberty in great devotion; and in the few nights before their fall, the lights of long and solemn processions, illuminated like magic files the dark streets, while their religious and mournful chants broke the stillness of the night.



CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL PREPARATIONS IN THE OTTOMAN CAMP FOR THE FINAL
ATTACK—MAHOMET'S DECLARATION TO HIS SOLDIERS—THE
NIGHT BEFORE THE ATTACK.

AFTER having heard the refusal of his proposals,
Mahomet immediately commenced the preparations for a general attack. He was aware of the feebleness of the Emperor, but he knew that the garrison would make a desperate resistance; and the superior skill as well as bravery of the Christians, guided him to take all advantages, to procure all useful means, and to contrive the most dexterous maneuvers and stratagems, which would facilitate the reduction of the city. The courage of the besieged could not be inflamed by any great hope, for if his army could not accomplish his design by military expertness, it could accomplish it by fatiguing, and finally overpowering them. The tremendous number of the Ottoman army, cancelled all doubts of the city's fall; and Mahomet in his preparations, took care to place the destined to death on the front, in order to fatigue the besieged, and to blunt their arms.

Those destined to death were religious fanatics and wild volunteers who were attracted to the banner, by the hopes of spoils and plunder. The founder of the Mahometan religion, had promised heaven as the reward of those who died before the walls of Constantinople, and innumerable crowds gladly followed the Sultan, fearless of death, and anxious of martyrdom. Influenced by Astrology, his favorite science, Mahomet fixed the day of the 29th of May for the final assault. From the 24th of the same month, great preparations were made through the camp ; and on the 27th, the military chiefs received the final orders. Few days before the great assault, heralds were dispatched to all parts of the camp, to proclaim the orders, the greatness, and the glory of the enterprise : crowds of dervishes, or Musleman monks, who were greatly respected for their holiness by every Mahometan, visited the tents and inflamed the mind of the soldiers, by picturing in most lively colors the felicity of the eternal life in paradise, which was the reward of all those that died in the holy war. In his zeal for his enterprise, Mahomet strove to make himself ✓

beloved, as well as feared by his troops ; and in order to infuse a war-like feeling in the whole army, he promised honor and great rewards which suddenly revived the energy of every Ottoman. He felt the loyalty of his soldiers, and he was careful to take advantage of all means that should increase their love towards him. He knew, that a besieging army would be more animated and encouraged by the promise of pillage, than any other reward ; and he was satisfied to make any sacrifice which would enable him to conquer Constantinople. When every soldier was already anxious for action, he declared : that a double pay would be given to the victorious troops, that he assigned to their value the captives, the treasures, and the spoils ; and that he would reward the soldier who first ascended the walls, with the governorship of the fairest province of his empire, together with such honors and richness which would surpass the greatest expectance. So great a declaration inflamed the soul of every Ottoman soldier with such zeal impossible to be cancelled. The Janizaries and the Bashas were confident of victory and

impatient to try their fortune; and every chief, every man, hoped to gain the rewards of the Sultan. In the night before the 29th, all the tents in the camp were illuminated by large fires burning in every direction. Amid the murmuring sounds of those who conversed, were occasionally heard the shouts of "*Allah!*" and the chants of the soldiers were echoed by the mournful and gloomy sound of the prayers, and of the *kirie eleison*, sung by the distressed besieged in churches and parades, in such consternation, which together with the wild noise of the camp, and the dispersed fires that interrupted to a great distance the deep darkness of the night, and resplended in the waters and on the bright armors seen glittering on all sides, made the prospect appear like a wonderful yet melancholy vision.



CHAPTER X.

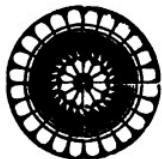
CONSTANTINE'S NOBLE CONDUCT—HIS APPREHENSIONS—THE FUNERAL ORATION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE—DESPERATE RESOLUTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

IN his distress, and amid the terrors caused by the approaching calamities, Constantine remained serene to keep awake the courage of his soldiers; but in his heart he felt the gradual disappearance of his hopes; he saw the last spark of the Roman Empire, becoming fainter and fastly extinguishing, like a star which after remaining bright in the dusk-colored sky, disappears by degrees on the appearance of the first rays of day-light. The glories and great triumphs of his ancestors, the power of the Roman arms in the past, and the fame of ancient generals, passed like a dream in his imagination. He saw no prospect of a deliverance, but awaited with all the courage which any great monarch ever possessed, the horrible storm whose black clouds he had long seen, and which were becoming more severely felt as they approached. The doleful thought that his country, his city, and

his throne, were to be in the possession of the infidels, against whom the great crusaders had many times fought, and for whose destruction the Christian world had lost many of its bravest warriors, aggravated the melancholy state of his condition, and strove to annihilate the energy of his mental powers. Yet he was far from being allured by the offer which his enemy had made ; he pictured the glories which he might receive, if he surrendered the city without a struggle ; but he almost felt the stings of the thorns which would surround such glories ; and his patriotic love made him conceive the honors that crowned the heroes that died for their country's liberty ; and he resolved to fight in the defence of his capital, till the last moment. On the evening before the twenty-ninth he summoned the most honorable Greeks and the bravest auxiliaries to his palace, and to them he made an eloquent harangue. It has been classed the funeral oration of the Roman Empire, and so it was,—the words which he spoke were his last to an assembly, and the last of the Roman emperors. He strove to infuse on all the

hope of victory ; he pictured in warm colors the glory of an honorable death ; he begged them to be courageous, to fight till the last extremity ; to die for their religion and liberty ; and to trust in Heaven for their success. His words were effective and pathetic : the officers and the senators, became indistinguishable from the soldiers and the poor ; they embraced one-another with the affection of brothers ; they wept and vowed to die with the Emperor ; their soul was inflamed by the resolution of victory or death ; and, when they had arrived at their assigned posts, anxiously awaited for the break of day. Accompanied by some nobles, Constantine entered the dome of St. Sophia ; and forgeting all the ceremonies of his rank, received amid tears and great devotion, the holy Sacraments. After having reposed a few hours in his palace, he gave a last farewell to his throne, which had been so often enshrined by immortal glories, and whose fame was dying forever. Mounting on horse-back he solicited the pardon of all those whom he might have injured ; and amid the tears of the crowd that surrounded him,

he spured his horse, and pressed forward. Overcoming the Melancholy that strove to make him sad, he went to the defences ; visited the most dangerous breaches ; inspected the new works ; and surveying the movement of the enemy, took his position on the largest breach of the landward side, which he understood to defend.



CHAPTER XI.

THE ATTACK—MILITARY SKILL OF THE BESIEGED—THEIR BRAVERY—PRECIPITANT RETREAT OF THE OTTOMANS.

EAR before day-light, the whole Ottoman army was ready for action. Four great columns extended from the sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn : before them were nearly one thousand volunteers that formed the vanguard ; and as they were undisciplined, badly armed, and almost without command, they were destined by Mahomet to fatigue the Christians, in order to give advantage to his best troops. The artillery was advanced to the edge of the ditch, and the fleet awaited the signal to attack the harbor part of the city. In the morning of the twenty-ninth, when the first rays of day-light had began to brighten the great city and camp, the loud voices of the Ottoman commanders were heard along the lines ; the army hastily moved to the assault, and a tremendous struggle was imminent. Urged forward by columns of soldiers, and exited by devices, throngs of volunteers rushed towards the

walls, without order, and like great torrents. But they were cut short by the weapons of the besieged : hundreds were prostrated to the ground : throngs after throngs advanced to fill their places, but only to meet with the same fate ; and after a short time, the great ditch was filled by a bloody mass. They had fulfilled the desire of their fellow-soldiers : a path was now made to the walls ; and a great army, fairly disciplined and commanded by Bashas, boldly ran to the attack. The fleet commenced action on the harbor side, and the battle was general and terrible. The result was doubtful ; the assailants fought with great boldness : their number was far superior than that of the besieged, but their skill far inferior ; and all those who attempted to ascend the ruined walls were precipitated. The city and camp were involved in the clouds of smoke : the dense air was filled with the incessant thunder of the cannons ; the horrible yells of the dying and the wounded ; the voices of the excited commanders ; the almost suffocated music of drums, trumpets, and atabals ; and the Greek fire, which was seen flashing amid clouds of smoke, like

lightning in a frightful stormy night. Careless of life and in a wild-like manner, torrents of Ottomans precipitated themselves against the walls; incessant shouts of "*La ilah illa lah!*" were faintly heard among other noises; their spirit was kept lively by the sound of martial music; they pressed onward, but only to meet death. The slain formed a thick harvest on all parts near the defences; innumerable swarms promptly filled the places of the prostrated, and the slaughter was tremendous. The besieged held their posts and in some places advanced; every one of them did more than twenty Ottomans; their discharges were well directed on the great army; their courage was invincible, and their spirit was vivified by the favorable prospect of victory. Amid the frightful rage of the battle, whose smoke shadowed to a long distance the bright rays of the rising sun, the distinguished voices of the Emperor and Justiniani were heard, like the echo when almost suffocated by the noise of a wind storm, inflaming the zeal of the soldiers, and urging them to fight on with all the vigor which they possessed. The battle con-

tinued with great fury : from the fleet, from the floating bridge, and all along the ditch, the Ottoman batteries kept up a destructive fire ; waves after waves of Turks were sent forward to feed the arms of the besieged ; and although thousands were successively slain, more advanced, as if the Sultan had an ocean of soldiers at his command. After two hours of tremendous struggle, the assailing throngs were greatly reduced ; on all sides the Ottomans fell in great numbers ; they were completely annihilated ; and overwhelmed by great confusion, precipitantly retreated. Incessant yells of joy were immediately heard from all parts of the walls,—Constantinople was delivered, and solemn chants of thanksgiving echoed the cries of the defeated army, and the slackening rumble of the battle.



CHAPTER XII.

DESPAIR OF MAHOMET—THE ATTACK OF THE JANIZARIES—JUSTINIANI WOUNDED—RUIN OF THE DEFENCES—THE GIANT HASSON—THE DESPERATE STRUGGLE—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE—FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE—RAVAGES OF THE OTTOMANS.

FROM the gradual ascend of the ground before the gate of St. Romanus, Mahomet saw, and was appalled at the sight. The defeat of his army made him shiver with ire and despair ; he cast a severe look around his ten thousand Janizaries, who watched with impatient feelings his motions ; and after a short pause, he rose on his stirups and shouted his war cry. The wild blares of his trumpets were heard far and wide ; the reserved Janizaries responded with ten thousand yells in one ; and a torrent, more terrible than all the others, swiftly moved towards the walls. The fugitives were stopped ; the officers hastily reformed their lines ; and the tremendous struggle was again commenced. Mahomet himself headed the last assault ; brandishing his iron mace he spured his horse onward ; his commanding voice was heard above the rage of the conflict ; his

threatening or encouraging words invigorated the soldiers ; his ministers of justice were behind him to stop and execute the cowards ; and the invincible torrent was urged on, to gain victory or death. The Christians bravely resisted ; their courage was still vivid ; the voice of the Emperor and of Justiniani kept warm their spirit and lively their actions. But a great misfortune, a misfortune which immediately turned the victory of the day befell them. The noble Genoese, Justiniani, whose great military skill and bravery had long kept the wild besiegers at bay, was wounded ; and the loss of blood with the tremendous pain, completely deprived him of the presence of mind, and he was carried away from the defences. Such a great loss weakened the energy of the Christians ; their ammunition began to be scarce ; and the walls were almost reduced to piles of ruins. The words of the Emperor still kept vivid their spirit ; their despair made them fight until death, but the fall of the city was beginning to be conceived.

The terrible torrent had not yet gained any advantage, when amidst the violence and fury of the strug-

gle, Hassan, a colossal Janizary, the boldest of the Ottomans, undertook to ascend the weakest and the less guarded part of the walls. Thirty soldiers accompanied him, and after a severe contest he reached the parapet. He had won the promises of Mahomet, and his bravery was rewarded by infinite glory and reachness. The Christians done all in their power to repulse the audacious band; eighteen of the thirty were immediately slayed, and the giant was precipitated from the submit. But he rose on one knee, and in a moment the whole army followed his example. The defences were tickly covered by swarms of yelling Turks: the fleet effected a passage on the harbor side, and the city was irrecoverably lost. A terrible and bloody conflict still continued, but the number of the assailants was nearly a hundred times larger; and at last, the Christians were overwhelmed and repressed from their posts. The Emperor still resisted; the faithful soldiers fell by his side while heroically defending him: he cast away the imperial purple, in order to be unknown to the enemy, and resolved to die on the spot. For a short time, the

victorious were kept from advancing ; great numbers of them fell successively on the harvest of bodies ; but the division which entered from the harbor side now reached the spot, and the few Christians were surrounded. Despair saized Constantine and his heroes, they fought with the greatest fury ; they no longer thought of life or liberty, but they contested for revenge. All those who advanced were immediately prostrated on the bloody mass, and the resistance was desperate. But at last, the wounds and the continous action exausted the energy of every Christians : they became powerless, their swords no longer delt powerful and irreparable blows ; and they were overpowered by the enemies who pressed forward from every direction. Fearing to fall by the infidels, the Emperor called for some Christians to kill him, but at the same instance he received a fatal blow and he fell dead. The few remaining nobles soon fell after him gallantly fighting, and his body was buried in a monument of corpses. Like tremendous lava torrents erupted from a great volcano, the Ottoman army rushed into the city from all the

breaches of the land and harbor sides. Amidst loud and fanatic yells, their bloody swords and maces prostrated all the Christians that they encountered. For a short time, they threatened a general massacre ; no person of any sect or age was speared ; but avarice soon predominated over blood-thirst ; the richness and the great buildings attracted their attention ; their arms were put aside, and the great destruction of violence, pillage, and plunder, began to devastate the famous city. The immense wealth accumulated by ages ; the relics for which many Christians had fallen in the times of the crusades ; the labors and gains of many years ; the fruits of glories and triumphs of the virtuous and great emperors ; and the treasures of the rich, who had hid them, and had refused to support with them their noble monarch, fell by the ravages of the victorious barbarians.



CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL CONSTERNATION—REFUGES IN ST. SOPHIA—THE SUPERSTITIOUS LEGEND—FATE OF THE CITIZENS—DEVASTATION IN ST. SOPHIA—SAFE ESCAPE OF THE AUXILIARIES—MAHOMET ENTERS THE DOOMED CITY.

THE terrible news soon spread through the city in a rapid course ; the inhabitants were suddenly horrified ; the houses, the palaces, and the monasteries, were immediately desolated ; and large throngs of all ages and of both sexes, ran yelling with terror and despair through the streets, in a most frightful manner. From every direction, the distressed people flowed in the great dome of St. Sophia ; and in a short time, the galleries, the choir, the nave, and the vestibules of the dome were packed full of soldiers, priests, monks, senators, nobles, plebeians ; of hundreds religious virgins, and of base crowds loosened from the jails. The doors were closed and barred, and the yells of horror and despair were for the first time silenced. Every one had a faint hope that the enemies would not molest them in the house of God. The confidence of the most bigoted was revived by

a superstitious legend which a remote prophet, or rather a religious impostor, had formed : that before the Muslemans should arrive at the pillar of Constantine the Great, situated on a square before St. Sophia, an angel would descend from heaven with a sword in hand, and immediately deliver the empire with the celestial weapon. But the angel was tardy ; and while they awaited in stupidity and confusion on the spiritual deliverance, those who were on the galleries near the windows, saw the glittering army advancing with rapidity and destruction. They warned the shivering multitude below of the nearing danger ; and after a short time, the tumultuous noise and the appalling yells of the destructive torrents were more distinctly heard, as they nearer approached. At last, the loud blare of the trumpets, the shouts of the soldiers, and the noise of arms, burst into the church through its many windows. The first blows of the axes were heard, the fugitives were thunder-struck ; they felt the chill of death ; tremendous yells of terror suddenly resounded in the great dome ; and all fell on their knees. After a moment

the doors were burst open, and a horrible, bloody, and hungry horde rushed in. At first, the Ottomans were wonder-struck and remained firm, stupefied by the extraordinary spectacle, but after a short pause they rushed on their precious prey. Whole lines of priests, slaves, senators, and virgins, were bound together and speedily led out by their captors who were anxious to get back for more. In a short time, the dome was cleared of its devotees: the statues, the altars, and the mosaics were thrown assunder by the impious barbarians: the crucifixes, the chalices, and the vases, were smashed for their gold, silver, or gems; and camels ladden with broken statues, fragments of crucifixes, and immense booty were let out on the streets, followed by long files of captured Christians. Within the time of few hours, the venerable dome, so rich, so beautiful, and so wonderfully constructed, long classed the terrestrial paradise, was on all sides disfigured; its glittering furnitures, its altars, and the gifts of many ages, were despoiled of their wealth, and reduced to piles of ruins. A similar violence contemporaneously devastated all the other

churches ; and the convents, the palaces, and the inhabitations, were despoiled of their treasures and value. No place could hide the person and property of the Greeks ; and before the middle of the day, about sixty thousands of the unfortunate inhabitants, were brought to the camp, where they were sold, and afterwards dispersed through the distant provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

The Italian ships still maintained the entrance of the harbor when the city was taken ; they had fulfilled their duty, and had the honor of being the only ones that gave strong help to the fallen city. While the Ottomans were dispersed and engaged in the work of pillage, the bold auxiliaries took the first chance of a retreat, and safely escaped with the wounded Justiniani, and laden with many helpless fugitives.

Nearly in the middle of the same day, Mahomet, attended by his viziers, bashas, and guards, triumphantly entered the gate of St. Romanus. He proudly rode onward, and beheld with the greatest satisfaction the beautiful domes and palaces, so

superb in appearance, and so different from the Oriental stile. But he was met by no festivity, no enthusiasm. The streets were tickly strewed with all the evidences of murder, plunder, and devastation ; and the fanatic yells of the merciless soldiers, were often echoed by cries or groans of despair. Here and there, long files of helpless citizens of both sexes and of all ranks, could be seen moving in hasty and trembling steps towards the place, where their captors would sell them as slaves. Horrible and most gloomy were their destiny and fate. The family ties and the courses of nature were broken asunder ; the fathers, mothers, and children, were separated from one another forever, scattered over the distant provinces of the vast empire, to pass a life of humble servitude, without the slightest hope of being relieved, and in the most sad and heart-breaking feelings which death only could end. The conqueror soon reached the Hippodrome, a great and charming amphitheatre, and riding in it, he gazed with wonder at its appearance. His eyes soon met the serpentine column, formed by three serpents twisted together,

and, as if to try his strength, he raised his iron mace and dealt it a powerful blow which broke the under-jaw of one of the monsters. Proceeding onward, he reached the superb dome of St. Sophia. There he paused, and after having dismounted, he entered it, and transformed it to a mosque. All the remaining marks of Christianity were immediately destroyed ; the mosaics were carefully obliterated ; and every part of the dome was reduced to meer simplicity. After he had performed the ceremonies of the Muselman prayer of thanksgiving, Mahomet proceeded towards the palace of the Cæsars where was the throne of the vanquished empire, so powerful in its beginning, so wonderful in its history, and so gloomy in its end. The enchanting pictures formed by the pompous emperors with their armor-bright body guards, handsome chavaliers, and gay retinues ; by the dignified princes and proud citizens, going to and fro ; and by the indomitable Roman knights and soldiers, whose gleaming arms and bright uniforms colored the populous streets, had all vanished ; and a picture of barbarism, destruction and desolation followed. The

mind of Mahomet could not help being effected by the contrast; and, influenced by the feeling which it produced, he repeated the impressing lines of the Persian poet: —

The spider weaves its web in the palace of the kings,
The owl hath sung her watch song from the towers of
Afrasiab.

Thus fell the city of Constantinople, after a siege of fifty-three days, on the twenty-ninth of May, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three.



Conclusion.

THE last spark of the Roman Empire was extinguished and never to be seen again. The city, which, in the dark ages, when the whole world was afflicted and oppressed by barbaric governments kept burning the great torch of civilization, and resplended its majestic light around and far on the populations, guiding them to the happiest way ; and which had often kept back the floods of Eastern barbarians, and saved the posterity of the Christian faith, was now fallen into the hands of the Ottoman Turks in whose possession it has always remained and still remains. The conduct and death of Constantine Palæologus are crowned by those glories acquired only by the greatest monarchs and patriots ; he defended his country with his soul and power ; he preferred death to ignominious felicity ; he fought with all the bravery of a greatest warrior in defending the breach ; and died, a most glorious death, for the

last and scanty remnant of his empire. "There," says a recent traveler, describing the spot on which Constantine fell, "where the earth was once dyed deep in blood, grew a thick carpet of daisies and wild flowers and a cloud of butter-flies hovered."







